THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): (a) to (c) In pursuance of the Common Minimum Programme, State Education Ministers and State Education Secretaries discussed the proposal to make free and compulsory elementary education a Fundamental Right in a Conference held on 9-10 August, 1996. The Conference has recommended constitution of a committee under the Chairmanship of Union Minister of State for Education to consider the financial, administrative, legal and academic implications of the proposal.

The question of mobilising funds for this purpose would arise after the Committee has considered the financial implications of the proposal.

Steps to Control Air Pollution in Tamil Nadu

2678. SHRI R. MARGABANDU: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken by the Central Pollution Control Board to arrest air pollution caused by more than 50 industries in Sipcot, Ranipet in Tamil Nadu; and

(b) the reasons for not cancelling the licences of these industries despite the emission of noxious gases by them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD): (a) and (b) As per the provisions of Section 17 of the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, the action is required to be taken by the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board and not by the Central Pollution Control Board.

Restriction on Trade in Agricultural Commodities

2679. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that inspite of liberalisation policy in vogue there are many restrictions on domestic and foreign trade in agricultural commodities, including seeds which are against the interests of the farmers in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action Government propose to take to remove these restrictions?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There are quantitative restrictions on agricultural commodities for foreign trade and inter-zone and inter-state restrictions on the movement and storage of foodgrains in some States. These are no restrictions on domestic trade of seed for sowing and planting purposes. As regards foreign trade the import and export of seed is regulated in accordance with the provisions of EXIM Policy 1992—97 subject to the fulfilment of the provisions of New Policy on Seed Development, 1988 PFS Order, 1989 and Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and flora and taking into consideration the domestic requirements and the commercial interests of the country.

(c) In the regime of liberalisation, the trade policy review is a continuous process and the prime objective is to safeguard the interests of both farmers and consumers.

Production and Procurement of Paddy in Punjab

2680. SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH MANN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) total production of coarse, fine and superfine varieties of paddy in Punjab during the last three years;

(b) the rates of which fine and superfine varieties of paddy were procured by procurement agencies during this period;

(c) whether PR-106, which is a superfine variety of paddy, was purchased at the rate of fine variety of paddy during the year 1995-96, togetherwith the details thereof; and

(d) what compensation would be given to the farmers for the losses accrued to them due to low rate paid to them for superfine paddy?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Variety-wise estimates of production of different crops including paddy are not prepared.

(b) Variety-wise minimum support prices of paddy during the last three years were as follows:

(Rs. per quintal)

Variety	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Common	310	340	360
Fine	330	360	375
Superfine	350	380	395

(c) PR-106 variety of paddy/rice was classified as Superfine in the State of Punjab by the procurement agencies during 1995-96.

(d) Does not arise.

Medical Facilities in Long Distance Trains

2681. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to provide medical facilities in long distance trains;

(b) if so, by when and in which trains these facilities are going to be introduced;

(c) whether this facility will be free or an amount will be charged from the passengers of these trains, and if to be charged, the amount thereof; and

(d) whether arrangements will be made that passengers of 2nd class are attended to on priority basis?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) to (d) First-Aid facilities are available in all passenger carrying trains. Proposals for making doctors available on long distance trains with related scope of medical facilities are under examination.

Stoppage of 'Shan-e-Punjab' at Rajpura

2682. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to provide stoppage of 'Shan-e-Punjab' Express at Rajpura Railway Station;

(b) if so, the action taken by Government in this regard; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Superfast character of Shan-e-Punjab and availability of other services at Rajpura.

Fish Farming Development Agencies

2683. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the fish farming development agencies are being set-up in every State;